

30 are believed to be allowable in view of the Examiner's statement in paragraph 39 of the Official Action.

Clam 1 has been amended so as to include the subject matter of claim 2 and to emphasize that one of the stationary ring member and the moveable connection member includes a pair of cross-supports as disclosed at page 7, lines 7-12, and page 8, lines 21-23, for example. Claim 2 has been cancelled and the dependencies of claims 4 and 14 changed accordingly. Thus, the Examiner's objection raised under 35 USC §1.75(c) has been mooted.⁴

The only issue remaining to be resolved in this application is the Examiner's art-based rejections. In this regard, applicant notes that the amended version of claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over Connors et al (WO 97/24169) in that the latter does not disclose or suggest that one of the stationary ring member and the moveable connection member includes a pair of cross-supports. While Connors et al does disclose a handle member 24 and 124 may be provided, pairs of cross-supports are not disclosed or suggested therein. Clearly there is no suggestion of the moveable connection member itself being provided with a pair of cross-supports.

Withdrawal of all art-based rejections of record is therefore believed to be in order.

⁴ It is noted, however, that such an objection should not have been raised in the first instance since the form of claims 5-8 and 15 was entirely sanctioned by 37 CFR §1.75(c) and MPEP §608.01(n). Specifically, each of claims 5-8 and 15 was dependent from only a *single* claim – i.e., claims 4 and 14, respective – which itself was multiply dependent. Thus each of claims 5-8 and 15 is not itself a multiply dependent claim since it does not "...refer back in the alternative to more than one preceeding independent or dependent claim." MPEP 608.01(n) Thus, each of claims 5-8 and 15 was properly dependent from a multiply dependent claim as originally filed.

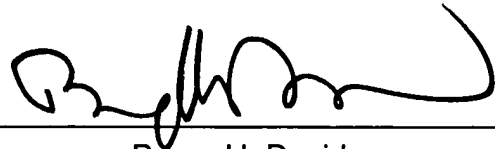
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Every effort has been made to advance prosecution of this application to allowance. Thus, in view of the amendments and remarks provided herewith, early receipt of the Official Allowance Notice is solicited. Such early and favorable action is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX I

Marked-Up Version of Specification Paragraph(s) Pursuant to 37 CFR §1.121(b)

Please change the paragraph appearing on page 6, lines 19-26 to read as follows:

As is perhaps more clearly seen in FIGURE 3, the bottom end cap 118 most preferably includes an arcuate central wall 118-1 which protrudes into the interior cartridge space 116 and a series of integral radial support ribs [20-2] 118-2. The arcuate central wall 118-1 and support [ribs] ribs 118-2 collectively serve to enhance the structural integrity of the filter cartridge body 112 at its lower end so that it may withstand the inlet pressures P1 associated with the inlet fluid entering the interior cartridge space 116.

Please change the paragraph appearing on page 11, line 27 through page 12, line 11 to read as follows:

Virtually any filtration media conventionally employed to filter fluids may be employed as the filtration media in the filter cartridges according to the present invention. Thus, for example, the filtration media may be comprised of a non-woven mass of melt-blown polymeric fibers formed, for example, from thermoplastic polymers, preferably polyolefins such as polypropylene, polyethylene and the like. Especially preferred filter media for filter cartridges are those as described more fully in commonly owned U.S. Patent Nos. 5,591,335 and 6,342,283 [U.S. Application Serial No. 09/358,886 filed July 22, 1999 (now U.S. Patent No. _____)], the entire content of each being expressly incorporated herein by reference. Alternatively (or additionally) the filter media may be comprised of pleated sheets of non-woven or woven filter

materials which are, in and of themselves, highly conventional in the fluid filtration art.

APPENDIX II

Marked-Up Version of Amended Claims Pursuant to 37 CFR §1.121(c)

1. (Amended) A filter cartridge comprising:
a generally cylindrical filter body having a fluid-filtration media, and
at least one length-adjustable end cap attached to an end of said filter
body, wherein
said length-adjustable end cap includes an annular stationary ring
member and a moveable connection member slideably received
within said annular stationary ring member so as to be moveable
longitudinally relative thereto, and wherein
one of said stationary ring member and said moveable connection
member includes a pair of cross-supports.

Please cancel claim 2.

4. (Amended) The filter cartridge of claim [2 or] 3, wherein said length-adjustable end cap includes an annular base member attached to an end of the cylindrical filter body, and wherein said stationary ring member is generally cylindrical and protrudes upwardly from said annular base member.

14. (Amended) The filter cartridge of claim [2 or] 3, wherein said stationary ring member includes a seal ring in slideable sealing contact with said neck portion of said moveable connection member.

-) 22. (Amended) A filter cartridge comprising:
a filter body which defines a generally cylindrical interior space;
a length-adjustable top end cap attached to an upper end of said filter
body and defines an opening to allow fluid-communication with said
interior space of said filter body;

a bottom end attached to a lower end of said filter body so as to close said interior space thereat; wherein

said length-adjustable top end cap includes:

- (i) an annular base member attached to said filter body;
- (ii) a generally cylindrical stationary ring member integrally joined at one end to, and extending upwardly from, said annular base member; [and]
- (iii) a moveable member having a generally transverse annular support flange, [and]
- (iv) a cylindrical neck member integrally depending from said support flange, and
- (v) a series of radially extending buttresses joined to said stationary ring member and said annular base member,
wherein
- (vi) [(iv)] said neck member is slideably received within said stationary ring member so as to move the support flange towards and away from said filter body and thereby establish respective lesser and greater axial dimensions of said filter cartridge.

Please cancel claims 25 and 31.

APPENDIX III

Please replace the Abstract of the Disclosure with the following:

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Length-adjustable filter cartridges are provided which in preferred embodiments include at least one length-adjustable end cap attached to an end of a generally cylindrical filter body. The length-adjustable end cap most preferably includes an annular stationary ring member which is attached to one end of the filter body, and a moveable connection member slideably received within said annular stationary ring member so as to be moveable longitudinally relative thereto. A seal is formed between the stationary ring member and the moveable connection member so as to seal against fluid leakage yet permit relative axial movement (length adjustment) therebetween. In use, the filter cartridges may be adapted to fit conventional standardized bag filter cartridge housings even though the physical size and/or geometries of the metal support basket thereof is non-standard.